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## Group says minorities victims of pollution

By Tom Charlier  
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Saying minorities face disproportionate environmental threats, a black church group on Thursday began looking at ways to deal with pollution dangers at sites ranging from the old Defense Distribution Depot Memphis to Memphis International Airport.

"For too long, African-American communities have been the dump sites for toxic waste," said Rev. L. Lasimba Gray, regional project director for the Memphis affiliate of the Congress of National Black Churches.

CNBC is drawing together a task force of community activists, health officials and church leaders to develop strategies dealing with so-called "brownfields" and environmental-justice issues.

Brownfields are abandoned or idle industrial sites, typically in inner-city areas, where redevelopment efforts are complicated by possible contamination problems. Environmental justice refers to combating class and race inequities as they pertain to environmental problems.

Among the committee members attending the initial meeting Thursday were activists from neighborhoods near the defense depot and the airport.

The depot, a hazardous waste Superfund site, has been plagued with underground contamination, while neighbors of the airport complain of noxious fumes and noise from jetliners.

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